

Frequently Asked Questions About the Fall 2008 Grades 3-9 MEAP Assessment Results

1) Since the assessments were taken in the fall, at the beginning of the school year, what content was tested?

Mathematics and English language arts assessments are administered in each grade from Grade 3 to Grade 8. These tests cover content taught during the previous school year. Science assessments are administered in grades 5 and 8 and social studies assessments are administered in grades 6 and 9. The science and social studies assessments cover content from the previous two to three grade levels.

2) Why are the MEAP assessments given in fall instead of winter or spring?

MEAP assessments are given in fall for several reasons. Fall testing allows assessment of the full previous year of instruction and measures student learning that was retained over the summer break. Fall MEAP administration ends early in the school year and encourages teachers to proceed quickly into teaching the current year curriculum.

3) Can MEAP Fall 2008 scores be compared to scores from previous years for the same grade and subject?

Beginning with Fall 2005, MEAP assessments are based on new content standards for both English language arts and mathematics, and the assessment period was moved from winter to fall. While comparisons may be made from the Fall 2005 MEAP test cycle through the Fall 2008 test cycle, it would be inappropriate to make comparisons to scores from test cycles previous to Fall 2005. Summary Reports for Fall 2008 show results for Fall 2005 through Fall 2008.

4) What is the Performance Level Change information that is reported?

In reading, overall English Language Arts (ELA), and mathematics, the four performance levels have each been subdivided into three ranges for each performance level (low, mid, and high). Using these new ranges, each student's change in performance from the previous year can now be categorized as a Significant Decline (SD), a Decline (D), Maintaining (M), an Improvement (I), or a Significant Improvement (SI). These categories reflect whether students are changing in their performance relative to the increasing expectations across grades.

5) How is the total score for English language arts (ELA) calculated?

The total ELA scale score is calculated using a weighted average (2/3 reading, 1/3 writing). A student must have a valid reading score **and** a valid writing score to be assigned a total ELA score.

6) Some of our students took the MEAP Makeup test (Form 11), how are their scores reported?

Student scale scores are reported for the Makeup test (Form 11) just as they are for the

initial test (Forms 1 – 10). The Fall 2008 Class Roster Reports will include students who took the initial test, followed by students who took the Makeup test.

7) Some of our students took the MEAP Makeup test (Form 11), why are these scores not included in the Item Analysis Report?

Fall 2008 was the first time that MEAP used a unique and separate Makeup Test (Form 11). Since no items were released from Form 11, there is no item analysis report for this form of the test.

8) Can Fall 2008 MEAP scores be used to get a preview of the school's status in terms of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

Not precisely. The process for determining the AYP status for a school or district is very complex, involving data from many sources. AYP status will be reported separately by the state. MEAP, MI-Access and ELPA are all used for most schools. To help with the AYP growth model, the Fall 2008 Summary Reports include a set of tables that track the changes in student performance from year-to-year in reading, total ELA, and mathematics. These tables delineate each of the transitions a student can demonstrate from year to year. The first table provides the number of students making each transition from year to year, a second table provides the percentage of students who made each type of transition, and the third table provides the percentage of students who started out in one performance range that ended up in each of the performance ranges the next year. These transition tables are intended to provide schools with very preliminary information on their AYP.

9) My school's fourth graders learned the content assessed in October 2008 at the K-3 school that they attended last year. Will those October 2008 scores be attributed to the school attended this year (2008-2009) or to the school attended last year (2007-2008)?

Because the fall assessments are based on content taught during the previous year, student performance for the determination of adequate yearly progress (AYP) is attributed to the school where instruction occurred the previous school year.

10) Some of the students assessed at our school were not enrolled at the school last year. Their scores do not reflect learning that occurred at our school. Why are these scores included in the public release?

The public MEAP results report on the performance of all students who were assessed at the building. MEAP has a 35-year history of including all students in the public reports. However, the scores of students enrolled less than a full academic year prior to testing will be excluded from the data used to determine if the school meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

11) Do these scores reflect the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) in English language arts and mathematics?

Yes. The scores are based on assessments which were built specifically to measure the new content standards (the GLCEs).

12) *How can students with disabilities be held to the same standards as other students?*

If students with disabilities took the MEAP, they are indeed held to the same standards as all other students. There are accommodations provided to assist students with specific disabilities (for example, a Braille version), but the students are all held to the same standards. However, if students with disabilities took MI-Access (Michigan's alternate assessments for students with cognitive disabilities), those students are assessed using alternate achievement standards that reflect the cognitive levels of those students.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans are developed for each student with disabilities by stakeholders in that student's education (e.g., parents, teachers, counselors, etc.). Those teams of stakeholders have the responsibility of determining which assessment test is the most appropriate for each student with disabilities and, therefore, the standards to which they should be held.